

VZCZCXRO7489
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2148/01 1731452
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221452Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5258
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002148

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/22/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO THE BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN

REF: BAGHDAD 02135

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C//REL MNFI) SUMMARY AND COMMENT. The Baghdad Security Plan commenced operation June 14. The June 20 MCNS review of the plan assessed the operation positively, noting room for improvement (reftel). On June 24, the plan will be formally reviewed to determine what modifications are needed to maximize progress. While some of the measures implemented by the plan, like additional checkpoints set up across the city, have inconvenienced the citizens of Baghdad, they have proven effective in controlling crime and decreasing violence.

12. (C//REL MNFI) The below comments reflect reactions from a variety of political contacts. The majority of our contacts agreed that improving the security situation in Baghdad would send a strong message to terrorists all over Iraq. They supported measures to stem the violence that has continued across Baghdad for the past several months. However, both Sunni and Shia contacts reported that they have not seen Baghdad Security Plan measures implemented in Shia neighborhoods, which has heightened Sunni concerns that the plan targets their communities. We interpret the following comments as partially representing the actual situation, but also biased by personal views. END COMMENT AND SUMMARY.

No Change in Shia Neighborhoods

13. (C//REL MNFI) Sadr City DAC member Ali Suadi told PolFSN in a June 22 conversation that the Baghdad Security Plan has had a negligible effect on security in Sadr City. According to Suadi, the only checkpoints in Sadr City are JAM checkpoints. There is no sign that JAM is concerned that ISF will interfere with their activities.

14. (C//REL MNFI) In June 18 meetings with PolOff, Ahmed Hassan, Hassan Shama, Ahmed Rahim, and Talib Hussein of the Sadr City District Advisory Council (DAC) said the Baghdad Security Plan has not affected security in Sadr City. Ahmed Hassan said the Sadrism-backed Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) still controls Sadr City. The extra security measures taken under the Baghdad Security Plan did not prevent the June 16 bombing of the Buratha Mosque in Baghdad. Hassan recommended that MNF-I and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) completely seal off Sadr City for several days, search every house, and arrest militia members. He added that the lack of security in Sadr City has caused some residents - Sunni Arab, Shia, and Kurd alike - to say they wish for Saddam's return, although he admitted that most people do not actually want this and say so only in anger.

15. (C//REL MNFI) On June 18, SCIRI CoR member Ijra Faisal Oda told PolOff that there is some evidence that the Baghdad

Security plan had been implemented in Sunni areas but that there was no activity in Sadr City and many Shia neighborhoods. She pointed out that her parents live in the very dangerous neighborhood of Hatema (located next to Ameriyah district) and claimed that the Iraqi Security forces have not set up any checkpoints.

¶16. (C//REL MNFI) On June 16, Iraqiyya COR member Hachem al-Hassani claimed that the plan had not been implemented in the Shia neighborhoods, which contributed to its politicization. He acknowledged that many Sunni areas will be targeted for terrorists, but that the PM needs to show on television that the plan is being executed in all areas of Baghdad, otherwise he should expect a violent backlash that could harm him politically.

Sunnis Okay with Plan, Anxious About Implementation

¶17. (C//REL MNFI) Sunni Arab leaders continued to view the Baghdad Security Plan with skepticism and believed that it has targeted their communities. Iraqi Islamic Party leader (IIP) Ala'a Makki told Poloff June 17 that there is great anxiety about the plan. He said people were afraid that the plan was meant to attack and disarm the Sunni people. He said that there was nothing wrong with the plan itself, just the manner of its implementation and asked for USG support to ensure that the security measures apply to all the sects, not just the Sunnis.

¶18. (C//REL MNFI) The IIP affiliated Dar As-Salam paper published a front page editorial on June 18 where it said it could not be optimistic if the new plan was like the previous ones - "we can expect more random arrests and killings." The editorial concluded that since the security forces were

BAGHDAD 00002148 002 OF 003

infiltrated by militias that participate in the raids, the coming days will show if the plan succeeds or fails.

Senior Sunni and Kurdish Leaders Not Consulted

¶19. (C//REL MNFI) Vice President Tarik al-Hashimi on June 11 said that he had several concerns about the security plan including that he and other Sunni leaders in government, had not been consulted when it was drawn up. The plan continued to refer to "terrorists" in Baghdad, a term previously used by the MOI to justify attacks on Sunni Arab neighborhoods, he said. In addition, MOI forces continue to control checkpoints in Sunni areas under the plan.

¶10. (C//REL MNFI) Senior Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Council of Representatives (CoR) member and former Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways told PolOff on June 19 that he personally had not been shown a copy of the Baghdad Security Plan. However, he agreed that it was crucial to secure Baghdad) if the capitol was safe, Shaways reasoned, it would send a positive message to the rest of the country. The key thing was to incorporate both Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior forces into the plan, and ensure that they were supervised by Coalition Forces. The Coalition's oversight would reassure citizens of Baghdad that they would not be unfairly scrutinized for sectarian reasons, and would act as "quality control" over the minimally trained Iraqi soldiers and police.

Checkpoints Not the Answer

¶11. (C//REL MNFI) Sadr City DAC members Talib Hussein, Ahmed Rahim, and Hassan Shama characterized the additional checkpoints that have been set up under the Baghdad Security Plan as "useless." They said that ISF has neither the equipment nor the training to effectively search cars for weapons, including bombs. As a result, the checkpoints serve only to create more traffic jams, they argued.

¶12. (C//REL MNFI) Baghdad provincial governor Hussain al-Tahan (SCIRI) told PolFSN June 19 that there is no organized security plan, just an increase in checkpoints and traffic problems. The additional troops were doing nothing more than duplicating the work of the traffic police. Al-Tahan called the plan "tribal," claiming that it had not been developed by experts. He said that he had called Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bulani to complain about the plan, and its focus on quantity not quality. To truly secure Baghdad, he argued, more checkpoints need to be set up at the entrances to the city, not within the city itself.

¶13. (C//REL MNFI) In a June 17 meeting, UNAMI Human Rights Officer Bushra Jamil told PolOff that the Baghdad Security Plan would not solve the security problems in Baghdad. She said that more checkpoints would do nothing but snarl traffic, however she also cautioned that more raids on private homes could increase public resentment towards the Iraqi security forces. Jamil insisted that the only way the security situation would improve would be for coalition and Iraqi forces to finally act on the information they already know, and start arresting and punishing the criminals committing the violence.

¶14. (C//REL MNFI) One Embassy FSN from Baghdad's Shia-dominated Qadimiya district commented on June 18 that locals were hopeful for the new security plan, but cautious. She noted that the plan had resulted in more checkpoints and waiting lines, and that this aspect of the plan made residents nervous. "We are afraid that a terrorist will target and try to attack these queues".

¶15. (C//REL MNFI) In a June 19 conversation with PolFSN, Baghdad City Council Chairman Basem Al-Yacoubi (Fadhila) said that it was too early to see results from the Baghdad Security Plan. He cautioned against rushing to judgment, noting that "maybe after one month we can evaluate the results." He also advocated for a greater focus on arms control, rather than movement control (checkpoints). If everyone turned in their weapons, perhaps in an amnesty effort, then violence would end he reasoned.

Comment

¶16. (C//REL MNFI) While many political contacts were critical of the Baghdad Security Plan, their criticism was generally aimed at implementation issues rather than at the plan itself. We report these comments knowing they may reflect

BAGHDAD 00002148 003 OF 003

individual views. Many consider new procedures cumbersome and inconvenient. For example, while the addition of checkpoints across the city creates traffic jams at times, the increased scrutiny both deters and prevents attacks.

¶17. (C//REL MNFI) Baghdad residents are strongly in favor of initiatives to increase security. Unfortunately the deep divide that has developed between Sunni and Shia, as well as between citizens and the security forces, makes consensus on security matters difficult to achieve. MNF-I and GOI officials are well aware of existing sensitivities, and will continue to assess the effectiveness of the plan and adjust strategies and procedures as appropriate.
SPECKHARD